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The Long-Term Economic Impact of Juvenile Criminal Activity

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Oral Presentation O2.2

THE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC IMPACT OF JUVENILE CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

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When the juvenile penal system is supposed to be focused on rehabilitation, how does committing crimes and being caught as juveniles affect their future economic success? In 2012, the FBI Arrest Statistics reports an estimated 1,319,700 minors were arrested. Since so many youths interact with the criminal system, it is vital for the strength of the workforce and for the quality of life of the minors to ensure that the system is rehabilitative. Using ordinary least squares regressions, I examine data collected from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth's 1997 cohort, and examine how interactions with the formal juvenile correctional system impacts a youth's future economic success, taken in 2013 and measured by income, average hours worked a year, and whether the participant received any income or wages in the past year. I find being caught for delinquent behavior, and subsequently being arrested, does significantly impact future income but only when education is not controlled for. I then briefly examine the correlation between education and arrests. Finally, I discuss the results and what they say about the juvenile criminal system, and suggest future policy.